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ABSTRACT

A detailed ecological model is used to develop a framework for assessing the incidence of child abuse among American Indians. Macro, exo, and micro levels of analysis are extended by the inclusion of mediating and potentiating factors that may either contribute to or ameliorate maltreatment or abuse. Abuse and its consequences are considered in terms of the context in which abuse occurs, the dynamics of the abuser and the abusive situation, and the results for the individuals and institutions involved. Initial discussion notes the difficulty of defining child abuse and outlines the interdisciplinary perspective employed. Subsequent discussion covers: (1) long-term potentiating factors of the macrosystem, with emphasis on Congress and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the education of American Indians, and foster care and adoptive placement in the social welfare system; (2) the legal macrostructure, in terms of governmental versus tribal jurisdiction and the Indian Child Welfare Act; (3) potentiating and compensatory, long-term protective factors of the exosystem; and (4) child abuse in the family microsystem. It is concluded that long-term protective factors, such as tribal and family strengths, have attenuated the impact of long-term ecological stress. Citations number 98. (RH)

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AMONG THE AMERICAN INDIAN:

ARE WE STILL BLAMING THE VICTIM

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ABSTRACT

There are little if any data on the incidence or the prevalence of child abuse in the Indian community. Some authorities suggest that abuse and neglect is no different than in the society as a whole. We maintain that as a result of societal abuse of the Indian and Indian family, that abuse in the Indian community may be different than in the larger community. In order to address this challenge more reliable data are needed.

ARE WE STILL AT WAR WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN?
CHILD PLACEMENT AND ABUSE: THE LATEST BATTLEFIELD

Are we still at war with the American Indian? Are we ignoring the American Indian family and thus providing a milieu for American Indian tribal discord and family disintegration and child abuse?

CHILD ABUSE

A definitional dilemma of child abuse and neglect and conceptual issues, become even more complex when compounded by cultural values. We suggest a framework that encompasses the many facets of child abuse and the American Indian family. Child abuse is discussed within the context of institutionalized abuse and neglect, a review of the little that is known regarding abuse and neglect in the American Indian family is also provided.

Professionals cannot agree on behaviors that constitute child abuse. The broadest definition includes failure to provide the environment and resources necessary for healthy development (Albee, 1980; Melton & Davidson, 1987). Though not a popular topic, professional and institutional abuse is an important category (Polier, 1975; Gil, 1987; Blatt, 1980; Knitzer, 1977; Mnookin, 1973). Legal, clinical, and research definitions are needed to guide legal, therapeutic and research strategies. The "intention" of the agent is vital to the discussion of abuse. Obviously a definition that is too narrow limits the scope of the inquiry to rare incidents. A definition that becomes too broad includes us all and limits specific action necessary to ameliorate conditions that result in the abuse of a child.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

Why do adults abuse children, who by nature are dependent on nurturance from the adult, and who assure the future of the species? An interactive model suggests that the environment in concert with the demands of the child precipitates abuse (Belsky, 1978; Belsky 1980; Parke & Collmer, 1975). For purposes of this paper we plan to discuss abuse in the American Indian family within the context of Belsky's (Belsky, 1980), and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the transactional model proposed by Cicchetti and Olsen (Cicchetti & Olsen, in press). We will consider abuse and its consequences in terms of:

- the context in which abuse occurs
- the dynamics (intention) of the abuser and the abusive situation
- and the results for the individuals and institutions involved

Bronfenbrenner argued that child abuse was a function of the degree to which social support systems exist and work for the parents--how human ecology enhances or undermines the parenting process (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Belsky developed and elaborated Bronfenbrenner's original ecological model, to incorporate four levels of analysis: macro, exo, micro systems and ontogenetic development.

Belsky's system serves as scaffolding for the more detailed structure provided by Cichetti and Olsen. The concatenation of these models provides a structure in which to discuss the ecology of abuse of Indian children. However, powerful influences of one level upon the other confound the clarity of much of delineation.

Cicchetti and Olsen extend the ecological model by including mediating and potentiating factors that may either contribute to or ameliorate maltreatment or abuse. The Cicchetti and Olsen transactional model examines the

intergenerational transmission of child maltreatment. Risk factors include two broad categories:

a. potentiating factors -- conditions that increase the probability of maltreatment

b. compensatory factors -- conditions that decrease risk

Either of these factors may include long-term or transient elements. Potentiating factors include long-term vulnerability factors -- that is, enduring variables that may be biological, psychological, or sociological in nature. Transient challengers are short-term potentiating factors that stress the ability of the adult to resist engaging in abusive behaviors. Compensatory factors include long-term protective factors, which are relatively enduring characteristics such as easy temperament, strong intellectual skills and flexibility. Transient buffers are compensatory factors that at least temporarily mediate the risk of maltreatment.

MACROSYSTEM: LONG-TERM POTENTIATING FACTORS

The subject of abuse and neglect becomes far more difficult to understand when dealing with the AI. The macrostructure clearly serves as a medium for institutional abuse of the AI child and her/his family. An assault on the integrity of family--institutional abuse of a psychological nature is considered to be abuse under the terms of the Child Abuse and Prevention Act of 1974 (Melton, 1987; Knitzer, 1977; Hart & Brassard, 1987).

The macrostructure, historically, has impinged on the AI family (i.e., the United States government in concert with many religious organizations). This macrostructure, we argue, has significantly altered the ecosystem of the AI and has diluted and distorted traditional family/tribal relationships. Supportive family and tribal affiliations were shattered, leaving the child more

vulnerable to abusive behavior within the AI family. The paternalistic relationship between the AI tribes and resultant dependency has provided a fertile milieu for the AI tribe-family to become dysfunctional and abusive toward their own.

CONGRESS AND THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

A major destructive force has been the United States Congress and its delegated Indian agency, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Even if the laws made by Congress and interpreted by the BIA were in the "best interests" of the AI, it was still with such conceit and egotism that it is difficult not to impugn the motives. The BIA has sabotaged the AI, in collaboration with other macrostructural institutions, through two of the areas that should have held promise for building family and tribal strengths-- education and social welfare policies.

AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION:

Along with warfare and disease, the Western education of the AI child has had a denigratory impact on their lives (Deloria, 1978; Szasz, 1977; Blanchard, 1983). Two major forces shaped the education of the AI child: governmental policies and Christian religion. The agenda was, for each, to make the AI "Christian" and "civilized." In order to accomplish this, the AI child was removed from the reservation (her/his home) and from family and tribe. The goal of "Indian education" by the Anglo, has, until very recently, always been the goal of religious conversion and assimilation into white society.

The attempt to civilize the AI proved disastrous for the tribal culture, family strengths, and child protection. Often, young men and women became indentured servants in the name of "vocational education" (Boyer, 1978;

Thompson, 1978; Hoffman, 1981). The AI child denies his/her native language and religion, was also denied decent "Anglo" education (Blanchard, 1983; Boyer, 1978; Thompson, 1978; Bergman, 1977; Berlin, 1978; Byler, 1977; Coolidge, 1977; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Jimson, 1977; Lewis, 1981; Meriam, 1977; Saslow & Harrover, 1968; Topper, 1979; Blanchard & Barsh, 1980; Blanchard & Unger, 1977).

Indian education from an Indian perspective focuses on becoming part of the kinship network that contributes to tribal goals. Thus, identity as a member of that family, knowing that language, history, religious and ceremonial events--was "Indian education." The macrostructure's imposition of Anglo education on the Indian child may well have unraveled the fabric of cultural consciousness, self-identification, and self-esteem of these children. The Anglo-American system has psychologically undermined tribal culture, language, religion, identity, and family ties--neither accepting nor respecting basic modes of the AI educational system (Blanchard, 1980, 1977; Dlugokinski & Kramer, 1974; Beiser, 1974). Evidence suggests that the education of the AI child has not significantly contributed to his academic or occupational success (Szasz, 1977; Topper, 1979; Blanchard & Barsh, 1980; Dlugokinski & Kramer, 1974; Beiser, 1974; Christensen & Demmert, 1978; Hammerschlag, Alderfer & Berg, 1973; Kleinfeld & Bloom, 1977; Beiser & Attneave, 1982).

Fortunately, from the Indian perspective, federal education did not succeed in totally destroying Indian identity, in part because so little schooling was available to Indians (there were 16,000 pupils in 113 schools, ages five to twenty-one in 1901 (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972, p. 8).

Current Education of the American Indian Child. In 1982, 40,000 children attended schools run by the BIA, where they were not only deprived of parents

but also provided with no surrogate parents. Children stayed in large, barren buildings where the ratio of students to adults was 80:1 or worse. The AI boarding school may well be a hazard to mental health (Christensen, 1978; Kleinfeld & Bloom, 1977; Beiser & Attneave, 1982). Thus, we see how a self-perpetuating abusive cycle may be lengthy separations. The consensus appears to be that the treatment of the AI child, either by government boarding schools, reservation schools and religious schools or foster placement has resulted in severe and unresolved identity crises for the AI adolescent (Berlin, 1978; Topper, 1979; Beiser, 1974; Christensen & Demmert, 1978; Kleinfeld & Bloom, 1977).

The practice of physical abuse further extended the magnitude of psychological maltreatment by the separation from home, family, and tribe. There are reports of youngsters tied to their beds or locked in irons as a punishment for minor infractions of the rules. An extensive literature details the consequences of disrupting the established attachment system of the young child (Bowlby, 1958; Firend & Burlingham, 1947; Goldfarb, 1943; Spitz, 1946; Brown, 1982). Depression is one consequence of early separation after an attachment is established (Brown, 1982). Deprivation of basic mothering leads to an inability to provide the same for one's children (Parke & Collmer, 1975; Metcalf, 1976; Adams, 1982; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972; Polansky, Chalmers, Buttenwieser & Williams, 1981). The abused child becomes the abusing parent (Parke & Collmer, 1975; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972, Polansky, Chalmers, Buttenwieser & Williams, (1981).

The government-sponsored education of the American Indian in consort with many religious organizations perpetrated abusive policies by undermining the AI family and destroying the foundation of self-esteem of the AI child.

THE SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM: FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT

History of Foster Care and Adoptive Placement of American Indian Children. The AI family has lived through centuries of abuse--not the least of which was foster care and adoptive placement of the AI child. Between 1948 and 1978, systematic foster placement of AI children into an alien culture took place on a regular basis. American Indian children were placed with families from the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Topper, 1979; Cundick, Gottredson & Willson, 1974). These placements often took place because the AI families felt financially unable to care for the child appropriately and deemed the placement less onerous than BIA boarding schools.

Prior to the enactment of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1979, the removal of AI children from their homes, and placement with non-Indian families was routine (Bergman, 1977; Topper, 1979; Brown, 1982; Blanchard, 1977; Blanchard; 1977; Franshel, 1972; Miller, Hoffman & Turner, 1980; Mindell & Gurwitt, 1977; National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, 1980; McCartney, 1975). Since the enactment of the IWCA, both the practice of AI boarding schools and Mormon and other non-Indian foster placements have come under attack (Mindell & Gurwitt, 1977; McCartney, 1975).

Current Foster Care and Adoptive Placement of American Indian Children. Statistics presented by the Association on AI Affairs illustrated the crises. Major findings indicated that not only were AI children placed in non-Indian foster care and adoptive homes more often than non-Indians, but the ratio of out-of-home home placement ran as high as 19 times greater for the Indian child compared to the non-Indian. Twelve times as many AI children were institutionalized as Anglo children (National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, 1980); one out of every four AI children were placed in foster

or adoptive homes (Mccartney, 1975). Ten thousand AI children were given to churches for sustenance and returned to the reservation at the age of 18.

Rationale Used to Justify Outplacement. The frequent (and arbitrary) placement of AI children for adoptive and foster care with non-Indian families professed the goal of assimilation into the dominant culture. Many others practiced foster placement off the reservation during the school year, purportedly to offer the AI child an educational advantage.

Evidence strongly suggests that foster care, let alone across cultures, is not without risks, for it later places the child's development in jeopardy. There are at least three major risks, depending on the age at which the child is separated. Separation trauma seems most devastating between ages six months and three years, again at around six years of age, and again at adolescence. The issue of divided loyalties for the young child and the reoccurrence of transfer and adjustment to the demands of a new family (and culture) undermine the development of a stable identity (Knitzer, 1977; Mnookin, 1973). Foster placement for the Indian child often included servitude. These attempts to "assimilate" the AI child, resulted in well-documented identity crises and more severe psychiatric sequelae (Berlin, 1978).

Also, the foster care system is unstable, placing additional demands on the child's developing sense of trust and security. Children might well develop more soundly and happily living with abusive parents rather than a series of foster parents (Knitzer, 1977; Mnookin, 1973).

One goal of foster placement was to provide an educational advantage for the AI child. An extensive study concludes "In summary, the data from this study do not support the hoped-for educational advantages of this program . . . . (Cundick, Gottredson & Willson, 1974, p. 819)." Contradicting

these data somewhat, a separate five-year longitudinal study of 96 AI children adopted by non-Indian families from 1958-1967 found only 10 percent of adoptees to be suffering from serious mental ill health. But this seemingly conflicting study included mostly children who were adopted as infants, and it did not follow them to school entrance or adolescence (Fanshel, 1972).

Removal of an American Indian Child from Home.

A Columbia Human Rights Law Review article argues that the current status of child-welfare for the AI child has amounted to denial of first amendment rights and cultural genocide for the AI (McCartney, 1975). Extreme prejudice has been practiced by judges and neglect and abandonment was charged when none existed (McCartney is not alone in this accusation [Knitzer, 1977; Thompson, 1978; Berlin, 1978; Byler, 1977; Jimson, 1977; Meriam, 1977; Redhorse, 1983; Limprecht, 1979; Giovannoni & Beccerra, 1979]). The majority of removals involved allegations of "neglect" and two studies indicated that the ground of "physical abuse" was advanced in only one percent of cases while 99 percent were justified in terms of "neglect, social deprivation," or "emotional damage"(Giovannoni, 1979).

Mental health workers, judges and tribal leaders have maintained that a large number of AI children are removed from home with little or no real evidence of neglect or abuse either because of cultural differences or prejudice. The welfare of the child should be a paramount concern, and the purpose of the juvenile court should be to secure for each child such care and guidance as will serve the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical welfare of the child. This does not necessarily mean enforcing white middle-class standards (Mnookin, 1973; McCartney, 1975). Such placements have jeopardized

the mental health of numerous AI youth and may rightly be judged "professional abuse" (Polier, 1975; Berlin, 1978).

Empirical data based on a non-Indian population of 949 cases of reported maltreatment was validated consensually, and eight factors were considered to be critical in the assessment of child abuse. These factors included physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional mistreatment, etc. Using these categories, Giovannoni and Bacerra (Giovannoni & Beccerra, 1979), found the best predictor of whether or not a social service agency will remove a child from his/her home is the absolute number of different types of abuse that has occurred. Seldom does a child experience one single form of abuse. Since many Indian children are removed from their homes on the basis of ONE indicator, this finding supports the contention by many AI social workers and judges that AI children are removed from their homes more frequently and with less cause than non-Indian.

The Child Welfare system has been a destructive force in the lives of AI families, and especially their children, by enforcing assimilation and attacking the heart of tribal society--the child's identity as a member of that group.

LEGAL MACROSTRUCTURE: GOVERNMENTAL VERSUS TRIBAL JURISDICTION

Even the legal macrostructure itself confounds the issue. Child abuse is an area that involves federal, state and tribal jurisdiction. Ordinarily, child abuse and neglect laws are the province of federal and state legislature; this is not the case with many AI families who may be of different tribes, governed by tribal law. Extremely complicated federal and state actions--treaties --and legislation plus historical agreements over the past 300 years and overlapping

piecemeal grants of jurisdiction render the AI family entangled in a jumble of regulations regarding abuse and neglect.

The situation is complicated further by a complex interface between federal,state and local tribal jurisdiction regarding child abuse and neglect. Jurisdiction depends on the state in which the AI family resides. And to further entangle the process, a few tribes are located in more than one state, and each state may have a different jurisdictional relationship with the tribe (Baurley & Street, 1981). As is the case with state courts, AI tribal courts have both civil and criminal codes that deal with child abuse and neglect.

The legal definitions as defined by legislative decree determine what constitutes a criminal offense. In terms of AI families and children, jurisdictional and definitional issues serve to confuse an already obscure question: Who is an Indian and who has responsibility for doing something about Indian child abuse?

Although these proceedings regarding child abuse and neglect vary widely among the different tribes, a major concern is to keep the family intact and preserve the child's AI identity.

The history of institutional abuse such as the fostered dependence on the BIA, forced boarding school placement of children, sterilization of AI Indian women without their knowledge, and broken treaty obligations have led to strong mistrust of the dominant system. Thus, most tribes chose not to rely on state protective agencies in cases of child abuse (Palmer & Pablo, 1977; Wise & Miller, 1983; M. Orrantia, personal communication, 1987).

LEGAL MACROSTRUCTURE: THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT

Both American Indians and non-Indians questioned the policy that determined foster placements and adoptions of the AI child. In 1974 the 93rd Congress held

hearings before the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. These hearings revealed a pattern of discrimination against AI in child welfare and child custody, pervasive use of white middle class standards, lack of due process of law, use of AI children by non-Indians as unpaid house and farm labor, and rejection of the AI child by non-Indian peers, who, when returned to the reservation lacked skills necessary for survival (McCartney, 1975; Limprecht, 1979). It was against this background of abuse and misuse that the Indian Child Welfare Act was drafted and implemented in 1979.

In general, tribes have exclusive jurisdiction when the child involved in custody proceedings lives on the reservation and, as a general rule, American Indians off the reservation are subject to state jurisdiction, but state courts must transfer to the tribe proceedings for foster placement or termination of parental rights upon petition by the AI child's parent, AI custodian or tribe--the parent, AI custodian, or child's tribe retains the right to intervene in any state court proceedings.

In spite of the intent to clarify jurisdiction in placement and custody proceedings among federal, state and tribal courts, there are still no clear guidelines as to when the Act preempts state procedures (Limprecht, 1979). In California, 1983 IWCA compliance review by the Department of Social Services revealed either very little compliance or a lack of documentation. Compliance has not significantly increased in the ensuing period of time (M. Orrantia, personal communication, 1987).

Involuntary foster care proceedings are allowed when the best interest of the child are in question, but it is incumbent upon the court to locate a foster family that represents the AI child's cultural background. The Act requires the party seeking foster care to notify the parents or guardian, and the tribe of

their intervention rights. As further protection, the Act establishes evidentiary standards for use in foster care placement. No foster care can be ordered without determination by clear and convincing evidence that continued custody in the child's home is likely to result in serious physical or emotional damage (Miller, Hoffman & Turner, 1980; Limprecht, 1979). The welfare of the child is the paramount concern and the purpose of the juvenile court is to secure for each child such care and guidance as will serve the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical welfare of the child (Hart & Brassard, 1987).

Those who have seen recent practices as leading to the demise of the AI family and thus the AI's heritage (Bergman, 1977; Berlin, 1978; Byler, 1977, Blanchard & Unger, 1977; Miller, Hoffman & Turner, 1980; McCartney, 1975; Redhorse, 1983; Unger, 1977; Attneave, 1977; Pipestem, 1981; Westermeyer, 1977) have hailed the Indian Child Welfare Act as a salutory legislative effort. In terms of our premise, any forces that undermine the family and the tribe are institutional abuse and are deleterious to the mental health of both families and children. The ICWA should strengthen family and tribal ties and provide some immunity from abusive governmental practices. However, critics admit past abuses but question the accrued benefits for the AI child and family of the effect of the ICWA. Fischler (Fischler, 1980) is critical of the Act because the legislation puts the rights of the parent and tribe above the needs of the child. He cites several studies regarding the high rate of abuse in the AI family and questions myths and culture of the AI, as being in the interest of the child.

> By regarding children as the property of parents, families, and tribes, the Indian Child Welfare Act will not protect them adequately. The required standard of proof of harm is too high (Fischler, 1980, p. 345).

But many AI social-welfare workers believe that his evaluation does not appreciate the important cultural differences between AI and non-Indian. And Blanchard and Barsh maintain that the ICWA goes a long way to re-establish the AI child as an important person within his own culture (Blanchard & Barsh, 1980).

EXOSYSTEM

POTENTIATING FACTORS

Long-Term Vulnerability. Intergenerational abuse and sociological factors provide major potentiating factors for child abuse in the AI family. Violence breeds violence (Bandura, 1973). Many AI parents and grandparents were themselves abused and neglected by separation, boarding school placement, and frequent foster placement. There were few, if any, parent models for the AI child--"very few Indian families today are not directly or indirectly 'boarding school products'" (National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, 1980). The lack of child development education and inappropriate expectations are major factors in child abuse. Urban relocation and rural reservations, separation from family, tribe and cultural heritage lead to social isolation, which further deprives parents of appropriate models, and which is also a well-documented correlate of child abuse (Parke & Collmer, 1975; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972; Helfer, 1987).

The AI suffers more from disease, illness, and limited longevity than any other ethnic group in the United States (Wise & Miller, 1983; Farris & Farris, 1976; Redhorse, 1981)--environmental conditions that lead to these facts must be considered abusive. Many of the preceding factors in synchrony with the media stereotype of the AI result in poor self concept, an additional factor related

to child abuse (Wise & Miller, 1983; Lefly, 1982). The birth rate of the AI is twice that of the non-Indian population, and increased family size is associated with maltreatment. Data from Metcalf's (Metcalf, 1978) report on 194 families corroborated the function of family size and family distress; households with six or more members relied less heavily on the services of the Child Resource Center than did smaller households. Further, the industrialization study of Oakland and Kane found a relationship between child abuse and family size and marital status. A significantly larger percentage of the mothers of neglected children were not married and came from smaller extended families (Oakland & Kane, 1973).

Transient Challengers. This review of institutional abuse of the AI discloses major environmental factors. Chronic unemployment on many reservations presents a transient challenge. Ample data suggest that unemployment is a major factor in child abuse (Parke & Collmer, 1975).

Additional Factors: In addition, the National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center (National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, 1980) lists these factors:

1. Institutionalized discouragement from assuming mature levels of responsibility; institutionalized dependency (historical relationship with U.S. government)
2. Self-abusive (alcohol and drug abuse)
3. Corporal punishment may be the only form of discipline used (as a result of boarding-school experience and fear of "spoiling" the child).

Common Traits of American Indians. The following traits may also contribute to the potential increased vulnerability to abusive behaviors:

1. Principle of self-reliance--hesitant to ask for help from stranger

2. Noninterference--live and let live
3. Non-confrontational--compliant in face of demand BUT do not comply
4. Diversity--AIs do not like to be lumped together
5. Respect for elders

COMPENSATORY FACTORS: LONG-TERM PROTECTIVE FACTORS

American Indian Values. At the time of the Anglo-European's arrival, social organization and civilization of the AI ranged from the highly developed civilization of the Mayan and the complex political structure of the Algonquin and Cherokee, to the early Stone Age structure of the Yahi in the Pacific Northwest. Nevertheless, all AIs suffered from brutal repression and destruction at the hands of the white settler.

The AI tribes are distinct and diverse but there is also lengthy literature to suggest that there are certain commonalities in values and beliefs that distinguish them, as a group, from the dominant culture. These values involve religious and philosophical beliefs, political systems, and basic concepts of child rearing and education (Deloria, 1978; Blanchard, 1983; Lewis, 1981; Merriam, 1977; Dlougokinski & Kramer, 1974; Wise & Miller, 1983; Attneave, 1977; Bachtold & Rangel De Jackson, 1978; Bachtold & Rangel De Jackson, 1978; Goodluck, 1980; Goodluck & Short, 1980; Green, 1982; Hull, 1982; Lewis & Gingerich, 1980; National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, 1980; Redhorse, 1981; Redhorse, 1980; Redhorse, 1980; Stauss, 1986; Green, Sack & Pambrum, 1981; Carpenter, 1980). Many of these dominant values such as group cooperation and concern for group, may well serve as long term protective factors.

American Indian Family. The extended family is recognized as an institution in AI tribes. Specific roles of aunts, uncles, and grandparents may

differ, but the AI couple is not left to rear children without assistance and advice. Culture, a cornerstone of AI life, and the family are inseparable. The family endows the AI child with a sense of self-hood derived from his/her membership in the family, clan, band, and/or tribe. This family includes a complex network of blood kin, nonblood kin and nonkin. In many tribes these relationships are established by formal rituals such as a naming ceremony. These lateral extensions incorporating several households affect life-long socialization contrast (Redhorse, 1981; Stauss, 1986).

Development of the Extended Family

Being Cared For. Participating in naming ceremonies (differs by tribe vis a vis age, etc.) establishes kinship responsibilities, and obligations. A name forms a cultural map from which one is to proceed--without a name, one's spirit can never come to rest in the afterworld. Nonkin assume these responsibilities. Uncles and aunts are models for children and help them acquire special skills.

Preparing to Care For. Introduces considerable self-reliance and personal decision making in accord with family relation patterns. Period of self-reliance but personal interdependence.

Assuming Care For. Usually the role of the elder--very active in rearing of grandchildren. They have the wisdom to rear. The grandparent has the wisdom to provide discipline and spiritual guidance (Redhorse, 1980).

Child Rearing. The AI child is central to tribal life. The child represents renewal and preservation of the AI way. The AI child is, at birth, an important and responsible member of the tribe with responsibilities to the larger group. Tribes, clans, all support the biological family in the socialization of the child (Blanchard, 1983). The education of the child is nonintrusive (described by some as permissive).

The child is expected to learn by observation. The didactic tradition in many tribes is experiential, and the child learns to use all his/her senses to understand the universe (Hammerschlag, Alderfer & Berg, 1973; Goodluck, 1980; Green, 1982).

THE MICROSYSTEM: CHILD ABUSE IN THE FAMILY

Child abuse and neglect in the AI community has received surprisingly little attention (Green, Sack & Pambrum, 1981; Carpenter, 1980). General consensus has been that abuse is not a major problem in the AI family and that charges of neglect are largely the result of misunderstanding of AI child-rearing traditions. However, Indians warn that physical abuse is increasing in the AI community, but there are no data to support this concern (Carpenter, 1980).

Contrary to this general consensus, Mayhill reports that the Navajo culture placed emphasis on survival and the preparation of the child. Thus practices such as whipping, sending children out in the cold without proper covering were considered to be appropriate (Mahill & Norgarrd, 1983). "The lessons the children learn make sense because they are directly related to the life of the tribal community and the children's place in their life" (Blanchard & Unger, 1977, p. 351).

Nor are there data on the extent or nature of sexual molestation and exploitation in the AI community, and no data suggest that sexual abuse in the AI community is any more or less frequent or different in nature than in the non-Indian community (Gall, 1985; D. Chadwick, personal communication, 1987). Several factors may make the AI community different in terms of how abuse is handled and reported, and at greater risk for child sexual abuse in some respects. For example, higher-risk families include those that are

geographically isolated and those engaged in substance abuse (Gall, 1985). Some elements of child-rearing concepts teach the child to be quiet and submissive to authority. Sexist and racist attitudes can devalue young children and teach them to expect exploitation. The secrecy that many communities award sexual topics may keep a victim from "knowing" what is wrong or unusual. Many families and communities are in current dysfunction, and in many AI communities the extended family has broken down.

Frequency of Abuse. The three sources on the occurrence of maltreatment of AI children are a study on the Navajo, a study of a Sioux reservation in South Dakota, and a report from the American Humane Society of AIs living off the reservation (about 50 percent of the AI population). In 1975, the incidence rate of reported cases of child abuse and neglect for a 12-month period was 13.5 per thousand for the Navajo (White & Cornely, 1981) and 11.07 per thousand on the Sioux reservation. Mortality, the result of abuse, was 5 percent of reported cases (Wichlacz, Lane & Kempe, 1978). In 1977, 1.4% of all U.S. child abuse reports and 1.7% of all neglect reports involved off-reservation Indians--AIs are only 0.4% of the United States population. However, no accurate data exist on the incidence of child abuse in the United States; the incidence rate reported in these studies suggest that child abuse and neglect on the reservation is as serious as in the nonreservation communities in USA (Fischler, 1983; Fischler, 1985).

Kinds of Abuse. There is even less detail regarding types of maltreatment in the AI population, but the general consensus is that neglect is more frequent than abuse. One study assessed the effect of industrialization on a Navajo reservation, comparing mothers of children diagnosed as abused with mothers whose children came to the hospital for other illnesses. Of the 49 reported cases of abuse and neglect, only two involved battering (Oakland & Kane, 1973).

A limited source of information on kinds of abuse can be extracted from reports from intervention and demonstration projects. These programs include Child Development Centers, Family Centers, etc., and reported abuse is taken from project case load and referrals. The Child Development Center (a funded child abuse and neglect program) on Makah Indian Reservation, Neah Bay, Washington, reported 6 cases of child abuse and 14 cases of neglect in a two-year period (Robbins, 1982). The American Indian Child Abuse program (Minnesota Chippewa) saw 213 families; this included 129 cases of neglect and 28 cases of abuse (20 of these 28 were sexual molestation) (National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, 1980). A successful ongoing program, The Urban Indian Child Resource Service, Oakland, California, serves 40 different tribes, and they assist with legal problems, employment etc., as well as child abuse and neglect. Of 194 referrals, 40 were for child abuse and neglect (no breakdown between neglect and abuse was given) (Metcalf, 1978).

San Diego County data from 1987 to 1988 shows there was a 3.4 percent increase in the population of San Diego County and a 14.4 percent increase in child abuse. According to data collected by Indian Child Welfare Consortium, during a similar period, abuse and neglect remains stable in the AI population. These data are made more significant by the fact that approximately 25 percent of the non-Indian population is under 19 while 36.6 percent of the Indian population is under 19. This strongly suggests that either abuse and neglect is not of the same magnitude as in non-Indian groups or that abuse and neglect remains in the group underreported. The prevailing wisdom among Indian professionals is that child abuse and neglect is an increasing problem. Despite the perception that abuse and neglect is increasing significantly in the Indian population, our figures on reported abuse and neglect in San Diego County belie this perception. We cannot adequately define child maltreatment or neglect for

the various AI cultures. Using our ecological terminology, there are ample potentiating factors which increase the probability any AI--because s/he grew up as an Indian--was neglected or maltreated. More important, we know very little about the potential compensatory factors which would decrease the risks, beyond vauge references to the power of traditional Indian values or an extended family support system. Certainly these Indian family strengths have operated across the diversity of Indian tribes for the good of many Indian individuals and families. If this were not true the disintegration of the Indian family and culture would be far ahead of where it now stands. Some would argue we are still at war with the AI and the latest battlefield is child placement and abuse.

SUMMARY

Bronfenbrenner maintains that human ecology is responsible for child abuse. Should this be the case, the AI community supplies fertile ground for such abuse. However, long-term protective factors (tribal and family strengths), have attenuated the impact of long-term ecological stress. Child abuse, at least on the surface, appears to be no greater, no less, than in less stressed ecological environments.

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